



**Ashburnham Village Center Zoning District Study Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 17, 2008, 7:00 PM
Senior Center, VMS Building**

Members Present: Joseph Daigle, Joseph Kalagher, John MacMillan, Elizabeth McLaughlin, David Perry, and Diane Hill (7:05p.m.). Members Absent: Jonathan Dennehy, Stan Herriott and Jim Whidden. Staff Present: Eric R. Smith, AICP, Town Planner

I. Introduction: Committee members, Town Staff

Meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m. Each Committee member introduced themselves to the rest of the Committee. Town staff present was Eric R. Smith, Ashburnham Town Planner.

II. Background and Informational Materials: Town Planner

The Town Planner gave a presentation on the background of the Ashburnham Village Center Zoning District and what led the Committee to be created. This presentation referenced some of the Informational Materials that were handed out at the meeting. Please see separate document that has been attached to these minutes for review of the Town Planner's presentation.

David Perry asked the Town Planner on how the new zoning for Wealthy Street in Grand Rapids had helped bringing in new businesses. The Town Planner said he was not aware of the results since he left in July 1995, but would contact someone he knows still working at the Grand Rapids Planning Department.

John MacMillan noted that besides the 2004 Village Center Zoning District requirements passed at the May 2004 Town Meeting, the other zoning districts (including the Village Center lot size and frontage requirements) go back to the Zoning requirements passed in 1973. John MacMillan also noted that there is a large house for sale at 6 Lawrence Street, also known as the Collins Rest Home.

Diane Hill discussed her property, 10 acres at 122 Main Street being located in the Village Center. The Town Planner noted that only the first 300-feet back off of her property is located in the Village Center, the remainder is in Residential-A. The Committee discussed the strip zone portion of the Village Center Zoning District that goes along Main Street from west of Cushing Street up to the blinking lights with Corey Hill Road and Lashua Road.

Diane also brought up the storing of junk vehicles, and now boats, at 38 Winchendon Road. She noted that businesses like that seem to be creeping towards the Village Center. John MacMillan noted that the business at 38 Winchendon Road is not legally allowed under the Ashburnham Zoning Bylaw and enforcement is the issue. The Town Planner knew that the Building Inspector

was aware of this violation, but unsure of the status of enforcement action and would check with the Building Inspector.

Peterborough, NH was discussed as an example for the Town of Ashburnham to strive for. The Depot Square development had been something like that Ashburnham Highway Barn Site is today before it was redeveloped. Now the area has walking paths, restaurants and stores, which connects with the rest of Peterborough Center.

The Committee discussed the signage and built environment of the Cumberland Farms strip development at 65 Main Street. Signage is likely grandfathered under zoning laws, but anything not grandfathered would have to go through enforcement by the Building Inspector. The Town Planner did note that this type of development is no long permitted in the Village Center Zoning District, based on the 2004 requirements. Parking for buildings is required to go to the rear or side of the buildings, for example.

III. Discussion of Proposed Committee Charge, Outline, Timeframe

John MacMillan indicated that the Committee's charge had been outlined in the Warrant Article from the November 2007 Special Town Meeting. Though the Moratorium Article failed, the idea to establish the Committee was supported. The Town Planner would provide Committee members with the Warrant article, which discussed recommended role for the VCZD Study Committee.

The Committee members reviewed and discussed the Draft Outline prepared by the Town Planner. Joe Kalagher suggested the Town Planner create a "Gant" style chart, so that the Outline can have a Timeframe associated with it. The goal for the Committee is to work within a timeframe to have zoning changes brought forth to a Fall 2008 Special Town Meeting.

Elizabeth McLaughlin noted that she has heard comments that Ashburnham makes it hard economically for businesses to open. Joe Daigle noted the need to make it easier for business to come to Town. Joe Kalagher noted that in past "taxpayer apartments" would allow the business owner to get supplemental income by having a rental housing unit on the second floor.

IV. Election of Officers (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Clerk)

The Committee discussed whether or not to hold election officers this meeting, given that six (6) of the nine (9) Committee members were present. Ultimately, it was decided to hold off on election of officers until the next meeting. The Committee decided to have elections for a Chairman and a Clerk and did not see need for a Vice-Chairman.

V. Scheduling of Future Meeting(s)

The next meeting of the Village Center Zoning District Study Committee was scheduled for Tuesday, January 29, 2008 at 7:00p.m. The Committee members present targeted having meetings every two weeks in order to move along with the rezoning study to meet the established timeframe.

VI. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45p.m.

Meeting minutes submitted by Eric R. Smith, AICP, Town Planner